The MAN in LOWER TEN

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Lawrence Blakeley, lawyer, goes to Pittsburg with the forged notes in the Bronson case to take the deposition of the chief witness for the prosecution, John Gilmore, a millionaire. In the latter's house the lawyer is attracted by the picture of a girl, whom Gilmore explains is his granddaughter, Alison West. He says her father is a rascal and a friend of the forger.

CHAPTER II.—Standing in line to buy a Pullman ticket Blakeley is requested by a lady to buy one for her. He gives her lower 11 and retains lower ten. He finds a man in a drunken stupor in lower ten, and retires in lower nine.

CHAPTER III.—He awakens in lower seven and finds that his traveling bag has disappeared and in its stead is another. The clothes likewise have been exchanged for others.

CHAPTER IV.—An amateur detective interests himself in the case. It is learned that the dead man is Simon Harrington of Pittsburg.

CHAPTER V.—Henry Pinckney Sullivan is believed to be the name of the man who disappeared with Blakeley's clothes and grip. He is suspected of the murder.

CHAPTER VI.—Blakeley becomes interested in a girl in blue. A dirk and blood stains are found in lower seven. Blakeley comes under suspicion.

CHAPTER VII.—Circumstantial evidence against Blakeley is strengthened. The train is wrecked.

CHAPTER VIII.—Blakeley is rescued from the burning car by the girl in blue. His arm is broken.

CHAPTER IX.—Together they go to the Carter farm for breakfast. She tells him her name is Alison West, his partner's sweetheart.

CHAPTER X.—Alison's peculiar actions mystify the lawyer. She drops her gold bag and Blakeley, unnoticed, puts it in his pocket.

CHAPTER XI.—He returns home and learns from his landlady of strange happenings.

CHAPTER XII.—Blakeley learns that a woman by the name of Sullivan, a fellow victim of the wreck, is in the hospital.

CHAPTER XIII.—He also learns that he is under surveillance and that the Pittsburg police are looking for survivors of the wreck.

CHAPTER XIV.—Blakeley hears of strange doings in a vacant house next door. Investigation is without result.

CHAPTER XV.—Cinematograph pictures of the train taken just before the wreck reveal to Blakeley a man leaping from the train with his stolen grip.

CHAPTER XVI.—Blakeley meets Alison at a dinner and returns her gold bag.

CHAPTER XVII.—He learns that a man resembling Sullivan leaped from the train near M——. The man sprained his ankle and stayed some time at the Carter place.

CHAPTER XVIII.—While making inquiries at the Carter place, Blakeley finds Alison. He kisses her.

CHAPTER XIX.—While dining in a restaurant the woman for whom Blakeley bought a Pullman ticket summons him to her table.

CHAPTER XX.—She tells him her name is Mrs. Conway. She tries to make a bargain for the forged notes, not knowing that they are missing.

CHAPTER XXI.—Blakeley tells his partner of the incident, and the latter evolves a theory that the woman killed Harrington.

CHAPTER XXII.—The amateur detective trails Bronson, and believes he has found Sullivan.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Blakeley and the detective go to the home of Sullivan's sister to investigate.

CHAPTER XXIV.—From a servant Blakeley learns that Alison West had been there on a visit and that Sullivan had been attentive to her. He also learns that Sullivan is married to a daughter of the murdered man.

CHAPTER XXV.—Returning home, Blakeley is informed that his house has been ransacked by the police.

CHAPTER XXVI.—Blakeley's partner tells him that his affair with Alison West is off.

CHAPTER XXVII.—Blakeley goes to the Forbes country home and finds Alison there.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—She tells him that she was on her way to Baltimore to marry Sullivan when the wreck came. She clears up some points regarding the tragedy.

CHAPTER XXIX.—Blakeley is summoned home by his partner. It has been planned to give Mrs. Conway the forged notes in exchange for Sullivan. Mrs. Conway kills herself and Bronson. The ashes of the forged notes are found in the room.

CHAPTER XXX.

Finer Details.

At ten minutes before two the following day, Monday, I arrived at my office. I had spent the morning putting my affairs in shape, and in a trip to the stable. The afternoon would see me either a free man or a prisoner for an indefinite length of time, and, in spite of Johnson's promise to produce Sullivan, I was more prepared for the latter than the former.

Blobs was watching for me outside the door, and it was clear that he was in a state of excitement bordering on delirium. He did nothing, however, save to tip me a wink that meant "As man to man, I'm for you." I was too much engrossed either to reprove him or to return the courtesy, but I heard him follow me down the hall to the small room where we kept outgrown law books, typewriter supplies and, incidentally, our wraps. I was wondering vaguely if I would ever hang my hat on its nail again, when the door closed behind me. It shut firmly, without any particular amount of sound, and I was left in the dark. I groped my way to it, irritably, to find it locked on the outside. I shook it frantically, and was rewarded by a sibilant whisper through the keyhole.

"Keep quiet," Blobs was saying huskily. "You're in deadly peril. The police are waiting in your office, three of 'em. I'm goin' to lock the whole bunch in and throw the key out of the window."

"Come back here, you imp of Satan!" I called furiously, but I could hear him speeding down the corridor, and the slam of the outer office door by which he always announced his presence. And so I stood there in the ridiculous cupboard, hot with the heat of a steaming September day, musty with the smell of old leather bindings, littered with broken overshoes and handleless umbrellas. I was apoplectic with rage one minute, and choked with laughter the next. It seemed an hour before Blobs came back.

He came without haste, strutting with new dignity, and passed outside my prison door.

"Well, I guess that will hold them for a while," he remarked comfortably, and proceeded to turn the key. "I've got 'em fastened up like sardines in a can!" he explained, working with the lock. "Gee whiz! you'd ought to hear 'em!" When he got his breath after the shaking I gave him, he began to sputter. "How'd I know?" he demanded sulkily. "You nearly broke your neck gettin' away the other time. And I haven't got the old key. It's lost."

"Where's it lost?" I demanded, with another gesture toward his coat collar.

"Down the elevator shaft." There was a gleam of indignant satisfaction through his tears of rage and humiliation.

And so, while he hunted the key in the debris at the bottom of the shaft, I quieted his prisoners with the assurance that the lock had slipped, and that they would be free as lords as soon as we could find the janitor with a pass-key. Stuart went down finally and discovered Blobs, with the key in his pocket, telling the engineer how he had tried to save me from arrest and failed. When Stuart came up he was almost cheerful, but Blobs did not appear again that day.

Simultaneous with the finding of the key came Hotchkiss, and we went in together. I shook hands with two men who, with Hotchkiss, made a not very animated group. The taller one, an oldish man, lean and hard, announced his errand at once.

"A Pittsburg warrant?" I inquired, unlocking my cigar drawer.

"Yes. Allegheny county has assumed jurisdiction, the exact locality where the crime was committed being in doubt." He seemed to be the spokesman. The other, shorter and rotund, kept an amiable silence. "We hope you will see the wisdom of waiving extradition," he went on. "It will save time."

"I'll come, of course," I agreed. "The sooner the better. But I want you to give me an hour here, gentlemen. I think we can interest you. Have a cigar?"

The lean man took a cigar; the rotund man took three, putting two in his pocket.

"How about the catch of that door?" he inquired jovially. "Any danger of it going off again?" Really, considering the circumstances, they were remarkably cheerful. Hotchkiss, however, was not. He paced the floor uneasily, his hands under his coat-tails. The arrival of McKnight created a diversion; he carried a long package and a corkscrew, and shook hands with the police and opened the bottle with a single gesture.

"I always want something to cheer on these occasions," he said. "Where's the water, Blakeley? Everybody ready?" Then in French he toasted the two detectives.

"To your eternal discomfiture," he said, bowing ceremoniously. "May you go home and never come back! If you take Monsieur Blakeley with you, I hope you choke."

The lean man nodded gravely. "Prosit," he said. But the fat one leaned back and laughed consumedly.

Hotchkiss finished a mental synopsis of his position, and put down his glass. "Gentlemen," he said pompously, "within five minutes the man you want will be here, a murderer caught in a net of evidence so fine that a mosquito could not get through."

The detectives glanced at each other solemnly. Had they not in their possession a sealskin bag containing a wallet and a bit of gold chain, which by putting the crime on me, would leave a gap big enough for Sullivan himself to crawl through?

"Why don't you say your little speech before Johnson brings the other man, Lawrence?" McKnight inquired. "They won't believe you, but it will help them to understand what is coming."

"You understand, of course," the lean man put in gravely, "that what you say may be used against you."

"I'll take the risk," I answered impatiently.

It took some time to tell the story of my worse than useless trip to Pittsburg, and its sequel. They listened gravely, without interruption.

"Mr. Hotchkiss here," I finished, "believes that the man Sullivan, whom we are momentarily expecting, committed the crime. Mr. McKnight is inclined to implicate Mrs. Conway, who stabbed Bronson and then herself last night. As for myself, I am open to conviction."

"I hope not," said the stout detective quizzically. And then Alison was announced. My impulse to go out and meet her was forestalled by the detectives, who rose when I did. McKnight, therefore, brought her in, and I met her at the door.

"I have put you to a great deal of trouble," I said contritely, when I saw her glance around the room. "I wish I had not—"

"It is only right that I should come," she replied, looking up at me. "I am the unconscious cause of most of it, I am afraid. Mrs. Dallas is going to wait in the outer office."

I presented Hotchkiss and the two detectives, who eyed her with interest. In her poise, her beauty, even in her gown, I fancy she represented a new type to them. They remained standing until she sat down.

"I have brought the necklace," she began, holding out a white-wrapped box, "as you asked me to."

I passed it, unopened, to the detectives. "The necklace from which was broken the fragment you found in the sealskin bag," I explained. "Miss West found it on the floor of the car, near lower ten."

"When did you find it?" asked the lean detective, bending forward.

"In the morning, not long before the wreck."

"Did you ever see it before?"

"I am not certain," she replied. "I have seen one very much like it." Her tone was troubled. She glanced at me as if for help, but I was powerless.

"Where?" The detective was watching her closely.

At that moment there came an interruption. The door opened without ceremony, and Johnson ushered in a tall, blonde man, a stranger to all of us. I glanced at Alison; she was pale but composed and scornful. She met the newcomer's eyes full, and, caught unawares, he took a hasty backward step.

"Sit down, Mr. Sullivan," McKnight beamed cordially. "Have a cigar? I beg your pardon, Alison, do you mind this smoke?"

"Not at all," she said composedly. Sullivan had had a second to sound his bearings.

"No—no, thanks," he mumbled. "If you will be good enough to explain—"

"But that's what you're to do," McKnight said cheerfully, pulling up a chair. "You've got the most attentive audience you could ask. These two gentlemen are detectives from Pittsburg, and we are all curious to know the finer details of what happened on the car Ontario two weeks ago, the night your father-in-law was murdered." Sullivan gripped the arms of his chair. "We are not prejudiced, either. The gentlemen from Pittsburg are betting on Mr. Blakeley, over there. Mr. Hotchkiss, the gentleman by the radiator, is ready to place ten to one odds on you. And some of us have still other theories."

"Gentlemen," Sullivan said slowly, "I give you my word of honor that I did not kill Simon Harrington, and that I do not know who did."

"Fiddlededee!" cried Hotchkiss, bustling forward. "Why, I can tell you—" But McKnight pushed him firmly into a chair and held him there.

"I am ready to plead guilty to the larceny," Sullivan went on. "I took Mr. Blakeley's clothes, I admit. If I can reimburse him in any way for the inconvenience—"

The stout detective was listening with his mouth open. "Do you mean to say," he demanded, "that you got into Mr. Blakeley's berth, as he contends, took his clothes and forged notes, and left the train before the wreck?"

"Yes."

"The notes, then?"

"I gave them to Bronson yesterday. Much good they did him!" bitterly. We were all silent for a moment. The two detectives were adjusting themselves with difficulty to a new point of view. Sullivan was looking dejectedly at the floor, his hands hanging loose between his knees. I was watching Alison, from where I stood, behind her, I could almost touch the soft hair behind her ear.

"I have no intention of pressing any charge against you," I said with forced civility, for my hands were itching to get at him, "if you will give us a clear account of what happened on the Ontario that night."

Sullivan raised his handsome, haggard head and looked around at me. "I've seen you before, haven't I?" he asked. "Weren't you an uninvited guest at the Laurels a few days—or nights—ago? The cat, you remember, and the rug that slipped?"

"I remember," I said shortly. He glanced from me to Alison and quickly away.

"The truth can't hurt me," he said, "but it's devilish unpleasant. Alison, you know all this. You would better go out."

His use of her name crazed me. I stepped in front of her and stood over him. "You will not bring Miss West into the conversation," I threatened, "and she will stay if she wishes."

"Oh, very well," he said with assumed indifference.

Hotchkiss just then escaped from Richey's grasp and crossed the room. "Did you ever wear glasses?" he asked eagerly.

"Never." Sullivan glanced with some contempt at mine.

"I'd better begin by going back a little," he went on sullenly. "I suppose you know I was married to Ida Harrington about five years ago. She was a good girl, and I thought a lot of her. But her father opposed the marriage—he'd never liked me, and he refused to make any sort of settlement.

Johnson Ushered in a Tall Blonde Man, a Stranger to All Of Us.

"I had thought, of course, that there would be money, and it was a bad day when I found out I'd made a mistake. My sister was wild with disappointment. We were pretty hard up, my sister and I."

I was watching Alison. Her hands were tightly clasped in her lap, and she was looking out of the window at the cheerless roof below. She had set her lips a little, but that was all.

"You understand, of course, that I'm not defending myself," went on the sullen voice. "The day came when old Harrington put us both out of the house at the point of a revolver, and I threatened—I suppose you know that, too—I threatened to kill him.

"My sister and I had hard times after that. We lived on the continent for a while. I was at Monte Carlo and she was in Italy. She met a young lady there, the granddaughter of a steel manufacturer and an heiress, and she sent for me. When I got to Rome the girl was gone. Last winter I was all in—social secretary to an Englishman, a wholesale grocer with a new title, but we had a row, and I came home. I went out to the Heaton boys' ranch in Wyoming, and met Bronson there. He lent me money, and I've been doing his dirty work ever since."

Sullivan got up then and walked slowly forward and back as he talked, his eyes on the faded pattern of the office rug.

"If you want to live in hell," he said savagely, "put yourself in another man's power. Bronson got into trouble, forging John Gilmore's name to those notes, and in some way he learned that a man was bringing the papers back to Washington on the Flier. He even learned the number of his berth, and the night before the wreck, just as I was boarding the train, I got a telegram."

Hotchkiss stepped forward once more importantly.

"Which read, I think: 'Man with papers in lower ten, car seven. Get them.'"

Sullivan looked at the little man with sulky blue eyes.

"It was something like that, anyhow. But it was a nasty business, and it made matters worse that he didn't care that a telegram which must pass through a half dozen hands was more or less incriminating to me.

"Then, to add to the unpleasantness of my position, just after we boarded the train— I was accompanying my sister and this young lady, Miss West—a woman touched me on the sleeve, and I turned to face—my wife!

"That took away my last bit of nerve. I told my sister, and you can understand she was in a bad way, too. We knew what it meant. Ida had heard that I was going—"

He stopped and glanced uneasily at Alison.

"Go on," she said coldly. "It is too late to shield me. The time to have done that was when I was your guest."

"Well," he went on, his eyes turned carefully away from my face, which must have presented certainly anything but a pleasant sight. "Miss West was going to do me the honor to marry me, and—"

"You scoundrel!" I burst forth, thrusting past Alison West's chair. "You—you infernal cur!"

One of the detectives got up and stood between us.

"You must remember, Mr. Blakeley, that you are forcing this story from this man. These details are unpleasant, but important. You were going to marry this young lady," he said, turning to Sullivan, "although you already had a wife living?"

"It was my sister's plan, and I was in a bad way for money. If I could marry, secretly, a wealthy girl and go to Europe, it was unlikely that Ida—that is, Mrs. Sullivan—would hear of it.

"So it was more than a shock to see my wife on the train, and to realize from her face that she knew what was going on. I don't know yet, unless some of the servants—well, never mind that.

"It meant that the whole thing had gone up. Old Harrington had carried a gun for me for years, and the same train wouldn't hold both of us. Of course, I thought that he was in the coach just behind ours."

Hotchkiss was leaning forward now, his eyes narrowed, his thin lips drawn to a line.

"Are you left-handed, Mr. Sullivan?" he asked.

Sullivan stopped in surprise.

"No," he said gruffly. "Can't do anything with my left hand." Hotchkiss subsided, crestfallen but alert. "I tore up that cursed telegram, but I was afraid to throw the scraps away. Then I looked around for lower ten. It was almost exactly across—my berth was lower seven, and it was, of course, a bit of exceptional luck for me that the car was number seven."

"Did you tell your sister of the telegram from Bronson?" I asked.

"No. It would do no good, and she was in a bad way without that to make her worse."

"Your sister was killed, I think?" The shorter detective took a small package from his pocket and held it in his hand, snapping the rubber band which held it.

"Yes, she was killed," Sullivan said soberly. "What I say now can do her no harm."

He stopped to push back the heavy hair which dropped over his forehead, and went on more connectedly.

"It was late, after midnight, and we went at once to our berths. I undressed, and then I lay there for an hour, wondering how I was going to get the notes. Some one in lower nine was restless and wide awake, but finally became quiet.

"The man in ten was sleeping heavily. I could hear his breathing, and it seemed to be only a question of getting across and behind the curtains of his berth without being seen. After that, it was a mere matter of quiet searching.

"The car became very still. I was about to try for the other berth, when some one brushed softly past, and I lay back again.

"Finally, however, when things had been quiet for a time, I got up, and after looking along the aisle, I slipped behind the curtains of lower ten. You understand, Mr. Blakeley, that I thought you were in lower ten, with the notes."

I nodded curtly.

"I'm not trying to defend myself," he went on. "I was ready to steal the notes—I had to. But murder!"

He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Well, I slipped across and behind the curtains. It was very still. The man in ten didn't move, although my heart was thumping until I thought he would hear it.

"I felt around cautiously. It was perfectly dark, and I came across a bit of chain, about as long as my finger. It seemed a queer thing to find there, and it was sticky, too."

He shuddered, and I could see Alison's hands clenching and unclenching with the strain.

"All at once it struck me that the man was strangely silent, and I think I lost my nerve. Anyhow, I drew the curtains open a little, and let the light fall on my hands. They were red, blood-red."

He leaned one hand on the back of the chair, and was silent for a moment, as though he lived over again the awful events of that more than awful night.

The stout detective had let his cigar go out; he was still drawing at it nervously. Richey had picked up a paper-weight and was tossing it from hand to hand; when it slipped and fell to the floor, a startled shudder passed through the room.

"There was something glittering in there," Sullivan resumed, "and on impulse I picked it up. Then I dropped the curtains and stumbled back to my own berth."

"Where you wiped your hands on the bed clothing and stuck the dirk into the pillow." Hotchkiss was seeing his carefully built structure crumbling to pieces, and he looked chagrined.

"I suppose I did—I'm not very clear about what happened then. But when I rallied a little I saw a Russia leather wallet lying in the aisle almost at my feet, and, like a fool, I stuck it, with the bit of chain, into my bag.

"I sat there, shivering, for what seemed hours. It was still perfectly quiet, except for some one snoring. I thought that would drive me crazy.

"The more I thought of it the worse things looked. The telegram was the first thing against me—it would put the police on my track at once, when it was discovered that the man in lower ten had been killed.

"Then I remembered the notes, and I took out the wallet and opened it."

He stopped for a minute, as if the recalling of the next occurrence was almost beyond him.

"I took out the wallet," he said simply, "and, opening it, held it to the light. In gilt letters was the name, Simon Harrington."

The detectives were leaning forward now, their eyes on his face.

"Things seemed to whirl around for a while. I sat there almost paralyzed, wondering what this new development meant for me.

"My wife, I knew, would swear I had killed her father; nobody would be likely to believe the truth.

"Do you believe me now?" He looked around at us defiantly. "I am telling the absolute truth, and not one of you believes me!

"After a bit the man in lower nine got up and walked along the aisle toward the smoking compartment. I heard him go, and, leaning from my berth, watched him out of sight.

"It was then I got the idea of changing berths with him, getting his clothes, and leaving the train. I give you my word I had no idea of throwing suspicion on him."

Alison looked scornfully incredulous, but I felt that the man was telling the truth.

"I changed the numbers of the berths, and it worked well. I got into the other man's berth, and he came back to mine. The rest was easy. I dressed in his clothes—luckily, they fitted—and jumped the train not far from Baltimore, just before the wreck."

"There is something else you must clear up," I said. "Why did you try to telephone me from M——, and why did you change your mind about the message?"

He looked astounded.

"You knew I was at M——?" he stammered.

"Yes, we traced you. What about the message?"

"Well, it was this way; of course, I did not know your name, Mr. Blakeley. The telegram said: 'Man with papers in lower ten, car seven,' and after I had made what I considered my escape, I began to think I had left the man in my berth in a bad way.

"He would probably be accused of the crime. So, although when the wreck occurred I supposed everyone connected with the affair had been killed, there was a chance that you had survived. I've not been of much account, but I didn't want a man to swing because I left him in my place. Besides, I began to have a theory of my own.

"As we entered the car a tall, dark woman passed us, with a glass of water in her hand, and I vaguely remembered her. She was amazingly like Blanche Conway.

"If she, too, thought the man with the notes was in lower ten, it explained a lot, including that piece of a woman's necklace. She was a fury, Blanche Conway, capable of anything."

"Then why did you countermand that message?" I asked curiously.

"When I got to the Carter house, and got to bed—I had sprained my ankle in the jump—I went through the alligator bag I had taken from lower nine. When I found your name, I sent the first message. Then, soon after, I came across the notes. It seemed too good to be true, and I was crazy for fear the message had gone.

"At first I was going to send them to Bronson; then I began to see what the possession of the notes meant to me. It meant power over Bronson, money, influence, everything. He was a devil, that man."

"Well, he's at home now," said McKnight, and we were glad to laugh and relieve the tension.

Alison put her hand over her eyes, as if to shut out the sight of the man she had so nearly married, and I furtively touched one of the soft little curls that nestled at the back of her neck.

"When I was able to walk," went on the sullen voice, "I came at once to Washington. I tried to sell the notes to Bronson, but he was almost at the end of his rope. Not even my threat to send them back to you, Mr. Blakeley, could make him meet my figure. He didn't have the money."

McKnight was triumphant.

"I think you gentlemen will see reason in my theory now," he said. "Mrs. Conway wanted the notes to force a legal marriage, I suppose?"

"Yes."

The detective with the small package carefully rolled off the rubber band, and unwrapped it. I held my breath as he took out, first, the Russia leather wallet.

"These things, Mr. Blakeley, we found in the sealskin bag Mr. Sullivan says he left you. This wallet, Mr. Sullivan—Is this the one you found on the floor of the car?"

Sullivan opened it, and, glancing at the name inside, "Simon Harrington," nodded affirmatively.

"And this," went on the detective—"this is a piece of gold chain?"

"It seems to be," said Sullivan, recoiling at the blood-stained end.

"This, I believe, is the dagger." He held it up, and Alison gave a faint cry of astonishment and dismay. Sullivan's face grew ghastly, and he sat down weakly on the nearest chair.

The detective looked at him shrewdly, then at Alison's agitated face.

"Where have you seen this dagger before, young lady?" he asked, kindly enough.

"Oh, don't ask me!" she gasped, breathlessly, her eyes turned on Sullivan. "It's—it's too terrible!"

"Tell him," I advised, leaning over to her. "It will be found out later, anyhow."

"Ask him," she said, nodding toward Sullivan.

The detective unwrapped the small box Alison had brought, disclosing the trampled necklace and broken chain. With clumsy fingers he spread it on the table and fitted into place the bit of chain. There could be no doubt that it belonged there.

"Where did you find that chain?" Sullivan asked, hoarsely, looking for the first time at Alison.

"On the floor, near the murdered man's berth."

"Now, Mr. Sullivan," said the detective, civilly, "I believe you can tell us, in the light of these two exhibits, who really did murder Simon Harrington."

Sullivan looked again at the dagger, a sharp little bit of steel with a Florentine handle. Then he picked up the locket and pressed a hidden spring under one of the cameos. Inside, very neatly engraved, was the name and a date.

"Gentlemen," he said, his face ghastly, "it is of no use for me to attempt a denial. The dagger and necklace belonged to my sister, Alice Curtis!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

And Only One Arm.

Hotchkiss was the first to break the tension.

"Mr. Sullivan," he asked suddenly, "was your sister left-handed?"

"Yes."

Hotchkiss put away his notebook and looked around with an air of triumphant vindication. It gave us a chance to smile and look relieved. After all, Mrs. Curtis was dead. It was the happiest solution of the unhappy affair. McKnight brought Sullivan some whisky and he braced up a little.

"I learned through the papers that my wife was in a Baltimore hospital and yesterday I ventured there to see her. I felt if she would help me to keep straight, that now, with her father and my sister both dead, we might be happy together.

"I Understand Now What Puzzled Me Then."

"I understand now what puzzled me then. It seemed that my sister went into the next car and tried to make my wife promise not to interfere. But Ida—Mrs. Sullivan—was firm, of course. She said her father had papers, certificates and so on, that would stop the marriage at once.

"She said, also, that her father was in our car, and that there would be the mischief to pay in the morning. It was probably when my sister tried to get the papers that he awakened and she had to do what she did."

It was over. Save for a technicality or two, I was a free man. Alison rose quietly and prepared to go; the men stood to let her pass, save Sullivan, who sat crouched in his chair, his face buried in his hands.

McKnight saw her, with Mrs. Dallas, to their carriage and came back again. The gathering in the office was breaking up: Johnson had slipped away as unostentatiously as he came. Sullivan, looking worn and old, was standing by the window, staring at the broken necklace in his hand. When he saw me watching him, he put it back on the desk and picked up his hat.

"If I cannot do anything more—" he hesitated.

"I think you have done about enough," I replied, grimly, and he went out.

I believe that Richey and Hotchkiss led me somewhere to dinner and that, for fear I would be lonely without him, they sent for Johnson. And I recall a spirited discussion in which Hotchkiss told the detective that he could manage certain cases, but that he lacked Induction. Richey and I were mainly silent. My thoughts would slip ahead to that hour, later in the evening, when I should see Alison again.

I dressed in savage haste finally and was so particular about my tie that Mrs. Klopton gave up in despair.

"I wish, until your arm is better, that you would buy the kind that hooks on," she protested, almost tearfully. "I'm sure they look very nice, Mr. Lawrence. My late husband always—"

"That's a lover's knot you've tied this time.' I snarled, and, jerking open the bow knot she had so painfully executed, looked out of the window for Johnson—until I recalled that he no longer belonged in my perspective. I ended by driving frantically to the club and getting George to do it.

I was late, of course. The drawing room and library at the Dallas country home was very empty. I could hear billiard balls rolling somewhere and I turned the other way. I found Alison at last on the balcony, sitting much as she had that night on the beach—her chin in her hands, her eyes fixed unseeingly on the trees and lights of the square across. She was even whistling a little, softly. But this time the plaintiveness was gone. It was a tender little tune. She did not move, as I stood beside her, looking down. And now, when the moment had come, all the thousand and one things I had been waiting to say forsook me, precipitately beat a retreat and left me unsupported. The arc-moon sent little fugitive lights over her hair, her eyes, her gown.

"Don't—do that," I said unsteadily. "You—you know what I want to do when you whistle!"

She glanced up at me and she did not stop. She did not stop! She went on whistling softly, a bit tremulously. And straightway I forgot the street, the chance of passers-by, the voices in the house behind us. "The world doesn't hold anyone but you," I said, reverently. "It is our world, sweetheart. I love you."

And I kissed her.

A boy was whistling on the pavement below. I let her go reluctantly and sat back where I could see her.

"I haven't done this the way I intended to at all," I confessed. "In books they get things all settled and then kiss the lady."

"Settled?" she inquired.

"Oh, about getting married and that sort of thing," I explained with elaborate carelessness. "We—could go down to Bermuda—or—or Jamaica, say in December."

She drew her hand away and faced me squarely.

"I believe you are afraid!" she declared. "I refuse to marry you unless you propose properly. Everybody does it. And it is a woman's privilege: she wants to have that to look back to."

"Very well," I consented with an exaggerated sigh. "If you will promise not to think I look like an idiot, I shall do it, knee and all."

I had to pass her to close the door behind us, but when I kissed her again she protested that we were not really engaged.

I turned to look down at her. "It is a terrible thing," I said, exultantly, "to love a girl the way I love you and to have only one arm!" Then I closed the door.

From across the street there came a sharp crescendo whistle and a vaguely familiar figure separated itself from the park railing.

"Say," he called, in a hoarse whisper, "shall I throw the key down the elevator shaft?"

THE END.

ELECTRICITY IN BIBLE TIMES

Some Have Offered an Explanation for Miracles by Supposing Its Use.

An electrical engineer of Munich named Stadenmann makes an ingenious argument to prove that the Jews in the time of Moses had an advanced knowledge of electricity, using passages from the Bible to enforce his claim.

His theory of the famed serpent of bronze is that it was a lightning conductor; and he also says that the temple at Jerusalem was protected by metal points connected with the ground.

The most ingenious speculation is in regard to the work of the covenant, which was made of walls of wood covered on both sides with metal. If this were connected with metal teeth on the temple roof, it would form a sort of leyden jar charged by the electricity of the atmosphere, and would give a shock to anyone touching it.

Mr. Stadenmann presumes that Moses gained his knowledge of electricity from the Egyptians. This ancient race certainly had a knowledge of many branches of science that it took the rest of the world thousands of years to learn. But the only proof that they were electrical engineers is one recently advanced by an archeologist—that they must have had electric lights because their underground temples show no traces of smoke.

Charm in Expression.

An amiable expression while thinking is like an agreeable inflection of the voice while speaking. An exaggeration in either case brings unnatural and many times quite unpleasant results.—From an article in the Circle.

Woman's Mining Claim.

Lady Sybil Grey recently accompanied her father, Earl Grey, governor general of the Dominion, on his trip to the Canadian arctic gold fields. Near Dawson City, the capital of the Klondike, she pegged out a claim for herself with all the prescribed legal formalities and christened it the Sybil. Her first panning out produced $20 worth of gold, which she considered a very promising start. During the long arctic winter Lady Sybil is working her claim by deputy, but she says she will return next summer to supervise operations and examine results in person.